



# Funky Soul is best-seller from Kia

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Associated Press

The boxy Kia Soul is still funky-looking and still has dancing hamsters in its award-winning television ads. But for 2012, the youthful Soul is restyled for a more high-tech look, has more powerful, yet more fuel-efficient

## REVIEW

engines, new six-speed transmissions and more features, including an infotainment system with voice recognition. Kia even offers 18-inch wheels now.

This model year, the five-door Soul also adds Idle Stop and Go (ISG), which automatically turns off the engine when the car is at idle, such as at a stoplight, and then automatically restarts the engine when the driver's pressure on the brake pedal lets up. The ISG, which is commonly found on gasoline-electric hybrid vehicles, helps conserve fuel.

What's not changed: The front-wheel drive Soul hatchback retains its industry-leading warranty coverage, which includes 10 years/100,000 miles for powertrain and five years/60,000 miles for limited, basic car coverage.

And it still comes standard with lots of safety equipment, such as traction control and electronic stability control, six air bags and antilock brakes.

Best of all, the Soul, which is a recommended buy of *Consumer Reports* magazine, remains priced below many competitors.

Starting manufacturer's suggested retail price, including destination charge, is \$14,650 for the base Soul with 138-horsepower 1.6-liter four-cylinder engine and six-speed manual transmission.

But the lowest retail price for a 2012 Soul with automatic is \$1,800 more, or \$16,450.

The 2012 Soul is offered with a 164-horsepower 2-liter four-cylinder with a starting



This model year, the five-door Kia Soul has been restyled for a more high-tech look and adds such features as a more powerful engine, infotainment system, 18-inch wheels and Idle Stop and Go. PHOTOS BY KIA



Soul's interior boasts leather-wrapped steering wheel and shift knob, audio controls on the steering wheel and metal-look interior trim.

## 2012 KIA SOUL PLUS

**Base price:** \$13,900 base with manual; \$15,700 for base with automatic; \$16,300 for Soul Plus manual; \$17,300 for Soul Plus automatic.

**Price as tested:** \$19,845.

**Type:** Five-passenger small wagon with front-engine and front-wheel-drive.

**Engine:** 2-liter double-overhead-cam four-cylinder engine with continuously variable valve timing.

**Fuel economy:** 26 mpg (city), 34 mpg (highway).

**Length:** 162.2 inches.

**Wheelbase:** 100.4 inches.

**Curb weight:** 2,778 pounds.

**Built at:** South Korea.

**Options:** Audio upgrade package (includes UVO infotainment system, rear camera, Infinity audio system), \$900; power sunroof and front fog lights, \$800; carpeted floor mats, \$95.

**Destination charge:** \$750.

MSRP, including destination charge, of \$17,050.

Competitors include the box-styled, Nissan Cube, which has a starting retail price of \$15,500 as a 2011 model with 122-horsepower, 1.8-liter four-cylinder and six-speed manual transmission. The competing 2012 Scion xB has a starting retail price of \$17,030 with 158-horsepower 2.4-liter four-cylinder and manual transmission.

Note that the federal government's top fuel-economy ratings of 27 miles per gallon in city driving and 35 mpg on the highway for the 2012 Soul with base engine are better than the fuel ratings for the

Cube and xB. For example, the 2012 xB's mileage rating is 22/28 mpg.

The Soul has become Kia's top-selling car, with sales topping 92,600 through the first 11 months of this year. This is up 52 percent from the same period a year ago.

No doubt buyers are attracted by the Soul's value for the price.

Standard equipment on all models includes ample cargo space, Sirius XM satellite radio (buyers must subscribe to keep this satellite radio beyond the complimentary tryout period), dual-level

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